



[Paulo Freire, 1921 - 1997](#)

Down with the Banking Theory!

It was Paulo Freire who gave us the word “conscientise”.

It was Paulo Freire, more than any other, who showed how the bourgeois education system, with its “**banking**” theory of pedagogy (please read today’s text, attached, and downloadable via the link at the bottom of this document), is not well designed to educate learners in the true sense of the word “educate”, but is principally and intentionally designed to reproduce the class relations that suit the ruling bourgeois class.

Education, which should by nature liberate the student, is made

by the bourgeoisie into a means of repression, said Freire.

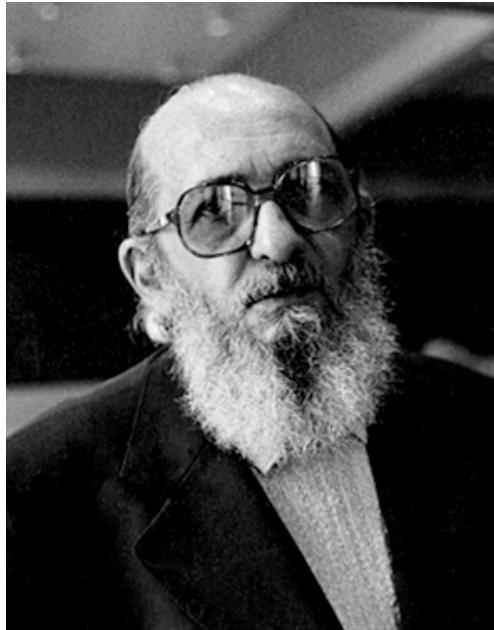
How can we make sure that education becomes part of the building of people's power? To ask such a question is to "problematise" education. To ask such a question is to begin a "dialogue" about education.

Freire thought that the education of the oppressed, if it was patronising, would be counter-productive. It would reproduce and reinforce the features of the oppressive bourgeois state. The method for avoiding the reproduction of oppression through education would have to be different and new, he thought.

So in the dialogical method that Paulo Freire devised and called the Pedagogy of the Oppressed, or otherwise Critical Pedagogy, there is no elementary, junior, senior, matriculation, undergraduate, post-graduate, doctorate or professor level. Teachers are learners and learners are teachers; all are free-willing subjects, capable of leadership at any moment.

As much as there may be a room and a gathering of individuals, each known by name, and a "codification" which is the text or other object prepared for the occasion, yet the dialogue admits no imaginary limits. The Freirean gathering is not sheltered. It is one of the essentials of Freirean Pedagogy that we refuse the fiction of the sheltered classroom, and instead recognise that the oppressor is around us and even within us, while we strive to liberate ourselves through our mutual, pedagogical dialogue.

In Freirean practice, there is no such thing as a basic level, or an advanced level. All that we can do is to practice a common process of “problematizing”, beginning with education itself.



For the late Freire (pictured here and at the top), and for the Freireans of today, all education is a political act and a social act, an act of liberation and an act of self-liberation.

In Freire’s work, philosophy, politics and education are considered together without any sharp borders between them.

Chapter two is the shortest and the easiest of the four chapters of Freire’s “Pedagogy of the Oppressed”. Please, for the sake of this course and of all the CU courses, download it and read it.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Pedagogy of The Oppressed, Chapter 2, 1970, Freire.](#)
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here.](#)